

CORY GARDNER
4TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0604

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The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley,

The Florida state court ruling this summer has sparked a national debate over self-defense and "Stand Your Ground" laws. Stand Your Ground laws exist in more than thirty states and, as you know, reflect the common law right of self-defense. I write to highlight my strong support of Stand Your Ground laws as the Senate Committee on the Judiciary examines these laws on October 29, 2013, in the hearing, "'Stand Your Ground' Laws: Civil Rights and Public Safety Implications of the Expanded Use of Deadly Force."

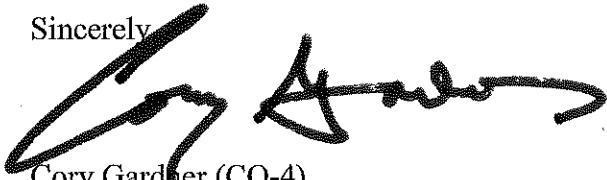
Self-defense is often defined as the right of protection of one's person or property against an injury attempted by another. It is the reasonable use of force in resisting an attack, and is an acceptable, legal defense. Stand Your Ground laws simply restate the right to self-defense and provide victims with statutory protection so that they know they cannot be prosecuted with a crime for protecting themselves from an intruder.

After the Florida ruling, Attorney General Holder made several comments attacking Stand Your Ground laws, and alluded that the Administration intends to override state criminal law with federal action. I wrote a letter to the Attorney General expressing concern and stated that any attempt to repeal or revisit self-defense or Stand Your Ground laws would be constitutionally questionable. I will continue to question any Administrative action or Congressional action that attempts to repeal or re-visit state self-defense or Stand Your Ground laws.

The letter contained several questions that have yet to be answered by the Attorney General. I was disappointed to recently learn that the witness list did not include a Department of Justice representative. Had this been the case, I would have encouraged the Committee to press for a thorough explanation of how self-defense laws jeopardize the public's safety and have this representative provide justifications for Attorney General Holder's comment that there is a duty to retreat.

As you prepare for this hearing, I ask that you consider the implications of overriding existing state law with federal action and remember the important role that self-defense plays in public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cory Gardner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cory Gardner (CO-4)
Member of Congress